

June 2, 2010

(Midland, PA) -- With the help of \$500,000 in federal funding secured by U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04), the National Network of Digital Schools Management Foundation will be able to help 10-12 Pennsylvania high schools develop new, innovative cyber learning programs. This new online educational initiative was announced at a ceremony today in Midland, Pa, a Beaver County town that is leading the way in K-12 cyber education.

“After a decade of innovation and experience, Pennsylvania has become a national leader in the field of K-12 online education,” Congressman Altmire said. “The \$500,000 in federal funding I secured for this latest project will help several Pennsylvania school districts develop their own online learning programs, expanding educational opportunities for students statewide. Pennsylvania’s success in integrating new online curricula into existing classroom structures is creating a model for the rest of the nation to follow.”

The \$500,000 federal funding secured by Congressman Altmire through the federal appropriations process will also help to create a number of Digital Learning Innovation Centers throughout Pennsylvania. These will be physical locations at which educators and the public will learn how digital education works, how schools of all types can adopt new educational technology, and how digital learning networks that are portable, adaptable and cost-effective can help to provide all students with equal access to quality curriculum and teachers, no matter where they reside.

Dr. Nick Trombetta, the founder and CEO of the Pennsylvania Cyber Charter School and founder of NNDS, said at today’s event that both entities have enjoyed great success in creating the human and technological infrastructure needed for online learning in the K-12 setting. As superintendent of the Midland Borough School District in the late 1990s, Dr. Trombetta led the small group of community leaders who chartered PA Cyber in 2000. The nonprofit foundation NNDS was created five years later with a mission to take the lessons learned and the online curriculum created to schools everywhere.

“With our success comes an obligation to help traditional schools cross the bridge to an educational future in which all schools are cyber schools, and no child shall be deprived

of quality teachers and curriculum because of where he or she happens to live,” said Dr. Trombetta. “This initiative we are announcing today brings that day closer. The Pennsylvania Digital Learning Network is an educational solution that will empower our schools and make our public school system more effective, more efficient, and more equitable.”

School districts selected to partner with NNDS in the Pennsylvania Digital Learning Network will have provided, at no cost to them, a selection of high school online courses designed to meet state standards, along with the state-certified teachers to teach those courses, training for host school personnel, learning management software, and a home website customized for each school.

The cohort of 10 to 12 schools selected for this grant project will be demographically diverse and representative of Pennsylvania as a whole, including urban, rural, suburban, small and large districts. Specific details on how schools may participate will be announced at www.nnds.org before the selection process begins in late June or early July.